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support his allegations by a solemn procedure. "Accept mine or I will accept yours," rd'iyi nghd rd'igh-ak, he says to his partner.

Notice the atmosphere in which this verb rd'â plunges, the root of which, Arabic, but adopted by all the Moroccan dialects, evokes in fact relations anterior to or superior to the strict law. It is in this way that in the sherifian chancellery a superlative of this root, ard'â, qualifies the "faithful and beloved" vassal. A litigant adopts heartily, rd'â, the sentence, or else accepts a /263/ witness, unless this should be the opposite. The ar. /Arabic/ Mâ rd'â-ch expresses the menacing despair into which iniquity plunges a person, driving him to a serious act: vengeance, malediction, suicide. As always in such cases, with rare outcroppings of a strongly archaic juridical lexicon, it is not so much an act that the word connotes as an attitude, a state. Corroded reminder of a stage when social relations were expressed as relations of "figure," of "personage," or, let us say, of status.

[152] [754] [762]

That undoubtedly accounts for the obscurity in which this agrarian ceremony plunges even now. Obscurity not only to our eyes, but also to the very ones of the actors. The devolution of the oath to one of the two adversaries is not regulated by anything expressible, in any case nothing that would be apt to be confessed by the present users. Doubtlessly it operates by virtue of emotions to which the tone of the words exchanged, the vigor of the cry of the one offended, the latent opinion of the riverains who flock together on the field contribute.

One of the two, then, proclaims that he is indeed at such-and-such a place in his rightful patrimony, aida-n-s. Simultaneously, he places on the contested spot a stone or clod dug from the field (1).

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1. We observed this practice nearly everywhere in Morocco. Always this unity of the ethnographic foundation!

A certain ambiguity of the interpretation may appear here according to the material of the instrument. The stone in the case at

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*631 159 the brother of El Hiba, sultan of the holy war in the South, and the son of Ma el ʿAïnin, sorcerer and theologian who left the desert of Mauritania twenty years ago to help the Sultan drive the Christians from the Empire. By his presence, this false sherif gives the revolt in which the tribes of the western Anti-Atlas persist the excuse of legality. Thus his existence confirms, even for the dissident region, our first impression of a Southern Morocco organized in a uniform manner into great commands according to rules of geographical division that are both simple and clear.

II. The internal organization of the great commands. --

*631 Let us proceed further with the appearances, alone observable for the moment, in order to understand, thanks to our guides, the external aspects of this political organization of the great kaids, which seems so different from that of the other Berbère /Berber/ countries of North Africa.

Although the great chiefs of the Atlas are subject to the Sultan and sometimes invoke his name to justify their conquests, we see, by the firm domination that they exercise over the mountain tribes, that their personal authority is much stronger than that of the ephemeral kaids of the plains of the North. We might have been tempted at first to think that these chiefs must be /125/ limited in the exercise of their command by the local institutions, whose democratic tendencies are so marked in other regions, such as the Rif, the Kabylie /Kabylia/, and the Aurès; but, on the contrary, the masters of the tribes seem to us to form here a veritable aristocratic and feudal class, established above the populations that they govern. When these mountain kaids assemble [628] their warriors, as during the reign of Moulay ʿAbd el ʿAziz, in [721] order to settle their quarrels among themselves, they disturb the whole country, without anyone's being able to intervene in order to stop their dissensions; if the Empire weakens, one sees them descending to the plains to fight over the rich regions of the Azaghar of Marrakech, to compete in order to get the government of the capital of the South and to protect the ruler. Even [152] when the lords of the Atlas return to their high valleys, they are still to be feared, and nobody knows exactly the limit of their

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*631 forces; it seems that their only weakness might be the jealousy
•[152] that divides them and sets them against one another.

What we are permitted to know about the internal life of the great commands, however, serves well to give us the best idea of
*631 the power of the Berbère /Berber/ kaids. At the center of their
712 domains they erected first of all imposing fortresses that contain
[632] hundreds of wives, relatives, servants, and slaves; artisans work in the courtyards of these casbahs; on the threshold, Jews sell and lend at interest; all this activity sometimes makes of their dwellings, such as Teîwet and Bouaboud, for example, veritable little
[343] towns in the heart of the tribes. Inside the enclosure of the cas-
[251] bahs one finds huge storerooms in which the grain harvested in the best lands of the valley is stored; it is there, too, that the subjects
[651] come to pay taxes in kind levied at the time of the harvest; fi-
[697] nally, far from indiscreet glances, in the deep underground vaults, stretch huge prisons, in which, in the vermin, the highway bandits, as well as the rebels mad enough to have tried to struggle against the all-powerful mountain lords, die slowly.

Most of the time, the casbah of the Berbère /Berber/ chief is alone in rising above the humble houses of his subjects. Other dwellings, scarcely less vast and luxurious, also protected by ramparts and decorated with towers, appear in the vicinity; these are the residences of the kaid's relatives. Thus we see /126/ that this domination is exercised over the land not by one chief, but by an entire family.

On the great access routes of the mountains still other fortresses rise up, often less important, it is true. Their role is to guard the most-frequented passages. Such are the casbahs of Agergour and of Tagadirt n Bour on the Nefis, of the Aît Oughir and of Tazert on the roads that lead to Telwet. In the tribes farther from the center of command, the "khalifats" /caliphates/ of the master also live behind solid ramparts, and some of these casbahs seem by their luxury and their proud dimensions to express a will for power and domination. To this last type belong, to the North of the Atlas, the fortress of Amismiz of the Gedmiwa and of the Aît ʿAddi at Imi n Tanout; on the South slope of the

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*634 616 independent revenues, which they use freely. Here they are, finally having become veritable tribal chiefs, masters of small states with precise boundaries; their territory is moreover surrounded by a zone of influence extending especially, thanks to ancient friendships, into their leff of origin.

*634 554 It is only then that the amghar has truly established his personal power; henceforth he rises above the ancient institutions, dominates the tribe, and, if he likes, becomes acquainted with the pleasures of fortune.

*634 342 712 178 VII. New aspects of the power of the amghar: the prison and the /319/ casbah. -- At this time two innovations mark the victory won over the Berbère /Berber/ traditions: the construction of a casbah and the laying out of a prison. Up to then the house of the amghar, chief of the canton, was established in the village; although it was adorned with borjs and whitewashed, it still recalled, by its position and arrangement, the humbler dwelling of the clan chief of the past. At present it is a fortress specially erected on an isolated hill, like Tagontaft, Adasil of the Ind Maghous, or Aoullous of the Ihebban in the Sirwa. Often it is even built in the midst of lands gained from a soff or leff enemy. Doubtless in the choice of a place apart from the village is to be seen the desire to occupy an important point from where one commands the valley and which lends itself easily at the same time to defense against an enemy coming from the outside; but at the same time the wish to separate the chief from his subjects is thus manifest.

*634 697 178 As for the prison, it, still more than the fortress, is an index of important changes in the life of the country; its presence indicates to us that the chief is henceforth above the laws of the tribe, to which he is no longer accountable for his actions: one enters his jail when he likes; one leaves it when God wishes it.

*634 •152 [648] Thus solidly established in a fortress with crenelated towers, provided with a redoubtable prison, the amghar can know rest. But often, too, the ambition that impelled him to win this high rank becomes an insatiable passion. If the country is screened from the surveillance of the Makhzen /makhzan/ or if other

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*634 circumstances favor the policies of the hostile heads of the assem-
•152 blies, new undertakings become possible. The amghar's tribe of
648 origin has its share of these new gains, and the small state does not cease growing. Having arrived at that degree of importance, he no longer lacks anything but the recognition of his power by
*[631] the Sultan. The amghar of Tagontaft and Si Mokhtar Seksawi cleared all these stages in 20 years and became veritable kaids without the investiture of the Makhzen /makhzan/.

*634 VIII. The decline of the leffs. -- Whether the amghar man-
616 ages to defeat one leff by means of the other, or whether he suc-
178 ceeds, thanks to clever politics, in conciliating the two, it is the forces brought to him by traditional alliances that establish his power. What becomes of them after his success?

During the period of conquest the policy of the Berbère /Berber/ chiefs /320/ is almost entirely dominated by the traditional alliances of the "taqbilt." But when the casbahs are built on the enemy's lands, the amghars, freed to a certain extent from current rules, overturn external alliances as they please, as we have seen. In the leffs of the tribes to subdue, they see no more than fracture lines in a block to be taken apart. Little by little, thanks to their efforts, even the ancient conception of the canton alliances is effaced in the minds of the montagnards and disappears before the new reality, which is the party of a great chief.

*634 The decline of the leffs then proceeds rapidly, and the suc-
*631 cessive stages of it are easily distinguished; first it is the "amqon
616 n mokahelt," the combat leff, constituted outside the ancient
178 rules by fractions linked together by circumstances, as we have observed in the Tifnout (1);

1. Book III, Ch. I, pp. 377-378.

then the alliance of the minor amghars with a more powerful chief, each of them bringing the warriors of his command into the fight, without distinction as to origin; finally, the party of the great chief is definitively formed, often at the price of complete upsets of alliances, as we have seen in the Gontafi's